

My Nervous Breakdown

The years when I was under hypnosis were from somewhere around Easter 1974 to the Autumn of 1980. Approximately six and a half years. These years were divided into:

1. The First Three Years.
2. The Nervous Breakdown.
3. The Second Three Years.

The First Three Years.

The first three years began when I was introduced to a man calling himself "Orman" who pretended that his organisation, The Emin, was a group which held the same religious beliefs as myself. At that stage in my life I was 20 years old and I believed that Christianity, Buddhism, The Hare Krishna Movement, Taoism and all of the other religions in the world were part of one truth which had been divided and needed to be connected together again as if one were collecting pieces of a jigsaw and assembling the pieces to see the big picture. I was very much mistaken and I didn't even know where the corners were or how to fit in the pieces of sky.

At no time was I informed that I was being placed under hypnosis although, in retrospect, it seems pretty obvious. I and the other people who attended meetings of the "Emin" were told to imagine energy fields, auras, etherics etc. We were told that the "force" was electromagnetic and was affecting our brains and putting us into different mind states. Sometimes we were told that we were in a "half state" between sleeping and waking. It was all basic Anton Mesmer stuff with fragments of philosophy taken from Gurdjieff and Spiritualism, distorted by the Emin leaders' own versions of things.

During this process we were told to change our appearance (get a haircut, dress a bit more smartly) and our lifestyles. Some Emin members went to something called "personal development sessions" but I don't know what those sessions were about because I was always told that I didn't need them. We paid a weekly subscription and studied "The Laws", "The Force" and tried to see blue lights around everything. It would have been pretty damned obviously brainwashing to anyone who was lucky enough to remain un hypnotised.

The standard brainwashing tricks were used as in The Manchurian Candidate. We were disassociated from normal reality and from our former selves. We were taught new ways of thinking, new meanings for words, new explanations for simple common sense things. For instance Leo, the leader of the cult, told us that we see by a process in which our eyes send out a beam of force which sticks to things and allows the light to come to our eyes by action-reaction. Lots of silly things like that which we believed or half believed. If we had any doubts there was a kind of wonderful (seeming) doublethink in which we didn't care about the doubt because Leo had said it and that meant that it must be right in some way or other. We were stupefied.

My first Emin meeting was at the house of a man called John Edge who was calling himself by the chosen Emin name of "Tristan". His "Lady to the Circle" was called "Elena". I didn't like Tristan. He made fun of my interest in Taoism and said "Ohhh, so we all have to be Chinese to get the wisdom do we?" He seemed either racist or xenophobic or, at the very least, culturally biased. He strutted up and down his living room jeering, mostly at me because I was the one who asked questions and disagreed with things. That soon changed as they got me more under their control.

During the day we went to work in jobs and kept an imaginary blue bubble, called a "blue shield", around our auras to prevent contamination by "life people".

We were "Emin people" and the people outside in "The Culture" or "The World" were "Life people". We endeavoured to keep our Emin and our "Life" separate from each other.

We earned our wages out in the culture and we paid the lion's share of them to the Emin. We were given the impression that all other religions and beliefs were rubbish and only the Emin had the truth. There were various remarkable individuals, such as Gurdjieff or Ouspensky, who had glimpsed a bit of the truth but only the Emin had the whole picture. I was continually being told by Orman that I was "quality" and that I was "good stuff" or that one day I would "take off like a rocket" and amaze everyone. He kept flattering me to the effect that there was some great thing which only I could do. That was a phrase Orman used a lot when speaking specifically to me "which only you can do". I never heard him say those words to anyone else. His father "Leo" also made odd comments about me, often giving me a weird feeling of being groomed for some purpose. I never found out what it was.

During the first three years I worked in various jobs. Firstly in a clothing shop in Wimbledon, then in a factory, Kango Electric Hammers, which made pneumatic drills. At Kango I began as a labourer and then took on the toilet cleaner job which offered a little more money each week. Eventually I got sacked from that job because I was too tired to get to work on time in the mornings. Up until then I had been the type of person who gets up early in the morning, goes to work, works hard and upholds his responsibilities. As an Emin person, however, I was burning the candle at both ends, staying up into the wee hours of the morning to study the Emin Laws, then oversleeping, going through the motions of doing a job in the daytime like sleepwalker, attending Emin meetings a couple of evenings per week, spending every spare moment studying the Laws. I was permanently exhausted, mentally and physically. The manager of the factory would put up with it no longer and I was sacked.

I searched for another job but I refused to sign on for the dole because I had moral objections to the "welfare state". I found other jobs on the same industrial estate at Deer Park Road, Morden. I went from one job to another, never really caring what I did for a living because God and religion were the important thing and that meant doing my "Emin work".

I had to live at my mum's house. From my earliest days in the Emin, Orman had made it clear that I had to stay at my mum's house and not move out to get a place of my own. My mum knew nothing of these instructions but was glad to have me living there.

On days when there wasn't an Emin meeting to go to I visited other Emin people most of whom lived in North London. Going to Emin meetings or even simply visiting Emin people

always involved journeys on the underground to North London. I was always tired but I read a lot of books on those journeys.

Eventually the continual fatigue took its toll and I had a nervous breakdown. Three years under continuous hypnosis was too much and my cognitive processes collapsed.

The Nervous Breakdown.

The Emin had opened a centre at Hotham Road in Putney. It was a shorter journey to there from my mum's house in Morden than all previous Emin locations. I then went to Putney a lot and helped out as an unpaid server whenever I wasn't at work in my paid jobs. I also still visited Emin friends in North London. There was a free and easy sense of comradeship in which the banter included references to "The Law of Two", "The Ray of Creation", "The Five Colour Power System" and other Emin nonsense.

The Emin had a system of ranks and levels. I didn't like it because it didn't fit with my idea of religion. I believed that we are all equal before God. Nevertheless the Emin had various ranks and, every now and then, they would tell us that we had attained a new level. I had been "First Establishment", "Second Establishment", "Third Establishment" and most recently in 1976 had been informed by Orman that I could go up to the next level. He said "And you can put yourself up to Silver now!"

So I ordered a silver tunic and was treated with respect because I was a "Silver Beacon". It was supposed to be a big deal although I didn't feel any different. In my "life" outside of Emin I was still getting regularly sacked from boring jobs for being too dozy and slow witted.

I began to behave erratically and was losing track of things. I didn't know what was going on. I had not had any girlfriend in the three years I'd been an Emin member and I began to feel that something was very wrong. I went out on a couple of very platonic dates with an Emin woman calling herself "Isis" (getting us to change our Emin names every so often was part of brainwashing disorientation) but I didn't like her. She was too flirty and vulgar and she liked the Rolling Stones. I was steadfastly listening only to classical music and religious songs.

Something was very wrong.

Orman had told us that the Emin had been investigated by some people called "The Haverstock Hill Witches Society" and he said that sometimes there were "occult attacks" which he needed to defend himself from.

There was an Emin woman called Minette with whom I was platonic friends. I used to visit Minette in her Camden council flat and chat and sometimes when she wanted to go out on a date I would babysit her little daughter Sadie. Minette was quite a nice bright, pretty woman who had ghastly taste in music. Most times when I was visiting she would put on a terrible monotonous druggy sort of record by J. J. Cale (whom I loathe) singing about not minding cocaine. I was never able to understand why she liked that horrible record.

As I became increasingly erratic I somehow decided that Minette and I should be kissing. I asked her to kiss me and she wouldn't. I became insistent. She still wouldn't. I didn't know

what to do. I asked a few more times, becoming increasingly needy and pathetic. Then I said goodnight and went home. I didn't feel like my usual self. I felt weird.

Next time I went to visit Minette I got the lift up to her floor in the high rise block of council flats and saw that the door of her flat was broken off of its hinges. Minette invited me in and I asked what had happened to the door. She wouldn't tell me and she said it didn't matter. Then there was a day when I was walking through North London, somewhere near Muswell Hill, and I decided to catch a bus to visit some friends in Kentish Town. I was reading a science fiction paperback (as usual) as I walked along the road. I saw a bus stop up ahead of me and walked towards it. There was a woman standing at the stop and I stood behind her. I was reading my book, glancing up occasionally to see if there was a bus coming. I only saw the back of the woman's head so I don't know what she looked like. The book was funny and I was laughing occasionally.

When the red London double decker bus came the woman got on and sat down somewhere on the lower deck. The driver wanted me to pay for two fares. "Why two?" I asked. He indicated that he wanted me to pay for the woman who had just got on. "She's nothing to do with me," I said. He insisted that I was supposed to pay for her. I refused and said I'd get the next bus rather than fall prey to some woman's confidence trick. I stepped off the bus. The driver informed me that I should probably get one to "Colney Hatch". I knew that this was the name of a London Borough where there used to be a lunatic asylum in olden times. He was suggesting that I must be mad to refuse to pay for the woman. Having only seen the back of her head I had no way of knowing what he was talking about but it seemed that he, at least, thought her attractive.

Next thing was that I had been sitting up in the middle of the night in my mum's living room working on some ideas about the "Laws" and when I walked into the hallway there was a strong smell of urine which seemed to be actual liquid and was flowing up my nose in contradiction of gravity. I immediately became convinced that this was one of those "occult attacks" which Orman had told us about.

My mum didn't have a telephone so I went out to the red telephone box down the street and phoned Orman. He wasn't happy about being woken up in the middle of the night. I explained what had happened and he said that the urine smell was nothing to worry about. He said that the world was like that all the time and that most people don't notice it because they are not sensitive enough. He said that my "higher senses" were switching on and so I had become aware of the electrical pollution which was in the astral light of the Planet Earth all the time. He instructed me to go home and push a pointy stick into all the corners of the room to drive away "homunculi" (which he pronounced "homo-quawl-eye"). He told me to get some sleep and call him the next day to tell him how I was.

I went home and performed the pointy stick ritual as instructed. Then I went to sleep. Having no work that day I got up late and had breakfast. Then I went out to the phone box and called Orman. As I was talking Orman interrupted me with the words "Why are you calling me?"

I began to answer.

I was intending to say “To tell you how I am” but something different happened. I got as far as the words “To tell you how...”

and then the next two words came out of my mouth as a loud shout.

It was the loudest shout of which I was at all capable. I didn’t do it on purpose. It just happened.

The words came out of my mouth as though from somewhere deep in my subconscious.

“To tell you how **I AM!!!!!!**”

After that I was disorientated and confused. There was a sound on the telephone but I don’t know whether it was crying or laughing. I don’t remember getting out of the telephone box. I don’t remember going back to my mum’s house. The next few days are a woozy blur. After a few days I got a letter from Orman addressed to “Dear Sir or Madam” and telling me to leave the Emin “for both our benefits” and not to come to Putney any more.

From then onwards things got worse.

I phoned up the Emin meeting place (“The Mixing Chamber”) in Putney and asked for permission to make an appointment to see Orman. I was told “Yes” that would be alright and given a date and time. However, when the day arrived I went into a panic and couldn’t iron a straight crease in my trousers. I became completely absorbed in the panicky attempt to iron the trousers of my suit properly and, when I still couldn’t do it and the time I needed to get to Putney had run out, I then did the only thing I could, which was to go out to the phone box and call to say I couldn’t make it to the appointment.

During the next few months I sat around in my mum’s house and stared at the wall. I couldn’t think properly. Something was wrong with my brain and I didn’t understand what it was. My mum and two of my sisters were in and out of the house from time to time. One of my sisters had married a new husband and they took me to where they lived but I didn’t really understand where I was or what was happening. There was a dog called Nick which had been our family dog since I was a child and, one day, I noticed that Nick wasn’t around anymore. My sister told me that he was “gone now” but wouldn’t tell me any details and I was too confused to ask her again.

The youngest sister bullied me into going to a local GP. I said I didn’t like doctors because they always try to peddle their pills. Eventually, however, I agreed to allow the doctor to examine me. I thought it very amusing when he said there was “nothing wrong” with me and then immediately contradicted that by writing out a prescription for whatever it was that wasn’t wrong with me.

The prescription was for Valium, which I immediately rejected because I had heard that it caused depression and heart attacks. The doctor scrapped that prescription and wrote out a new one for something called “prothiaden”. Again I objected to his pill pushing but my sister intervened and made me promise to get the prescription made up by the local chemist. I

agreed to this but secretly I was glad that she didn't make me agree to actually take the medicine, only to have it made up by the chemist.

The third and eldest sister invited me to visit her up in Wolverhampton and, when I was feeling slightly better, I managed to make the journey unaided. While I was at her house in Wolverhampton her husband, a special constable, sat me down in his living room for a little "man to man talk". He seemed to think that I was a homosexual and a coward and he smiled to himself as he declared that I was "too much of a coward to take the coward's way out". He kept deliberately mispronouncing "The Emin Society" as "The HE-Man Society". He assured me that he understood me because he had been in the army and had often "taken the regimental goat". I assume that this bizarre expression must be the army way of saying that he had had homosexual relations with one of the other soldiers. What a lonely sailor might call "just pretending".

While I was at Wolverhampton I changed my mind about the prothiaden capsules. I took one of them, had my first deep and unworried sleep for several months, and then flushed the remainder of the bottle down the toilet. I really don't like drugs or alcohol.

After a week or so I went back to my mum's house in Surrey.

I was feeling much better and I could sleep properly and think properly. The middle sister got me a job in the petrol station where she was the manager. It was a nightshift job which suited me because I had begun gravitating to a nocturnal waking, diurnal sleeping cycle.

Once I had re-established my ability to hold down a job again I returned to the Emin and joined a group led by an Emin Usher called Beta. He was an ex-advertising agency man with a Gurdjieff-style moustache and a bizarre sense of humour. People liked him but generally agreed that he was a bit of a bully.

That was the end of the nervous breakdown period. Now comes the final three years.

The Second Three Years.

So, against all sense, I had returned to the regular Emin meetings which had messed me up in the first place. Why? Because I still believed in them and the hypnotic hold they had over me was still there.

In Beta's group I was no longer a Silver Beacon and I was back amongst new Emin students who were learning the basics of "Emin Groundwork". It was a great relief to me to be free of the responsibility of Three Establishments and a Silver Tunic. I felt that a great weight had been lifted from me.

The two "ladies to the circle" of Beta's group went by the chosen Emin names of Sunny and Ming.

"Sunny" was Angela Bruce, a television actress, although I didn't know that she was a famous television actress because I never watched television in those days.

“Ming” was an Emin lady who had previously gone by the name “Lake”. When she changed her name to Ming one of the Emin men said to me that she shouldn’t be called that. I didn’t understand why not. I only knew of three meanings to the word “Ming”: It was either a Chinese Dynasty, a valuable vase from that dynasty or the name of a villain in a Flash Gordon comic. Since then I’ve learned that Londoners use the word “minging” to mean ugly. I didn’t know that in those days. I am not a Londoner.

Beta once said to Ming, in a group meeting, “What is it you do for a living? Geomorphologist is it?” Ming reacted with puzzlement. It was clear from her reaction that she wasn’t a geomorphologist but I don’t know why Beta thought that was funny.

I made new friends, some Czechoslovaks who lived in Shepherd’s Bush and three Canadian girls called Tranquil, Ari and Celeste (these are examples of the sort of Emin names we all adopted). One of the Czech women seemed keen to start a relationship with me even though I had not shown any interest or affection toward her. Straight out of the blue she was saying we could “push the beds together” and I was thinking “My god she must be desperate to say that to the first random bloke who isn’t attached to anyone”.

Celeste was a Canadian First Peoples woman whose house had burned down and, when she got the insurance money, had decided to visit England. Tranquil and Ari were two Canadian sisters who liked me and frequently invited me round to the flat they shared with Celeste in Finsbury Park. To enable me to stay late instead of rushing off to the tube station before the trains stop running they used to make up a guest bed for me and Ari, the youngest of the sisters, would come into the room in her dressing gown to speak to me for a little while before I slept. I was aware that this procedure appeared to be a very chaste sort of invitation to romance but I could do nothing about it. I had been deeply indoctrinated to “always respect the Emin ladies” and I thought that meant never thinking of them in a sexual way. I was always mindful that I had joined the Emin to serve God, not to engage in permissiveness. If I hadn’t joined the Emin my intention had been a life as a priest or a monk.

The Emin went through frequent changes. From “The Emin Society” it changed at various times to “The Eminent Way”, “The Eagle Endeavour” and “The Church of the Emin Coils”. This latter was the name they adopted when they registered as a church in Florida, U.S.A. I didn’t watch television. I didn’t get the jokes people sometimes make about television shows. Beta, the Usher, once made a joke about the Emin’s use of anagrams. He said “And what does “Fawlty Towers” anagram to?” I didn’t get the joke. I had never heard of Fawlty Towers. Somebody asked me what I thought of Sarah Jane Smith. I didn’t know who she was either.

A new man called “Roe” took over as the new leader of the Emin. I didn’t know who he was. He had come from out of nowhere to take over the job previously done by Leo and his sons Orman and Pilgrim. To me, “Roe” seemed fishy.

The leaders were always men. Leo liked his sons but was scathing about his daughters. He often said “I also had three daughters. A worm can have children”. He never explained what he meant by this. Women in the Emin were always called “ladies” and the word “women” was never used. Men were the leaders of the groups and the women had to sit at the back

and monitor "The Force". In other words they were sitting there "monitoring" something invisible and non-existent. They were bound into sitting quietly and looking pretty by Leo's "invisible force". If you're not hypnotised you'll easily figure that one out.

Leo was a terrible public speaker. He would say all sorts of things which his audiences would not necessarily understand and he never explained most of these. On one occasion he was talking about how things had changed over the years and he said these words "And now we've got rivers of blood..." Think about that for a moment. He was making a reference to a racist speech made by Enoch Powell in the 1960s but I, and many other people in the audience, were too young to know the reference. Leo usually talked about the "Esoteric, Occult and Religious" as he put it, so we expected everything he said to be on one of those three topics. I was going around trying to puzzle out the esoteric, occult or religious meaning of "rivers of blood" while completely unaware that it was a quote from a horrible racist speech. I had been listening to an album of American religious Appalachian "Shape Note" singing where the lyrics speak of "Pain and pleasure, rivers of gold..." and I thought Leo's "rivers of blood" must be something to do with that. He was idiotic enough to quote something as toxic as that Enoch Powell phrase without giving any context or explanation.

By 1980 the hypnotism had worn thin. I was no longer believing everything they said without question.

I resigned from the Emin and then went back to protest by walking up and down outside with my sign "Emin Unfair to Searchers".

I went to a lot of other groups which were different to Emin, as a method of de-programming myself from Emin. I went to something called "Eckankar" which was like a C.I.A. version of Sikhism and had been founded by an American called Paul Twitchell who thought that wearing his baseball cap backwards was a radical thing to do. I went to Hare Krishna Temple and stayed the weekend at Bhaktivedanta Manor. I joined the Buddhist Society in Eccleston Square, Victoria, London. I went to the London Central Mosque and asked the Arabic scholars whether I had been given the correct definition of the word "Emin".

Leo and Orman always said that "Emin" was an Arabic word meaning "The Faithful One".

The Arabic scholars at the London Central Mosque told me that "Emin" was a Europeanised distortion of an Arabic word. The correct word was "Ameen" and is essentially the same word said at the end of Christian prayers, "Amen". It means "I concur" or "trustworthy". The sense of it in usage is to confirm that the words of the foregoing prayer are trustworthy, worthy to be trusted. Hence "I concur".

The Emin emphatically was not trustworthy.